Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held via Videoconferencing facilities (MS Teams) on Monday 26th June at 3pm

Present:	Roderic Gillespie (Committee Chair) Mark Aberdein (Independent Governor) Michelle Brabner (Principal) Catherine Durr (Staff Governor) Anita Holt (Associate Governor) Kash Kalim (Independent Governor)
In Attendance:	Paris Bonwick (Asst. Principal MIS and Apprenticeships) Mark Burrows (Vice Principal Curriculum and Performance) Lisa Farnhill (Clerk to the Corporation) Stephen Musa (Asst. Principal Student Experience and Welfare) Paul McGregor (Student Governor invited to be an observer)
Apologies:	Heather Austin (Student Governor) Susannah Porter (Independent Governor) Victoria Wickington (Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning and Quality)
Absent:	Katy Robinson (Independent Governor)

Minute No.	Minutes	Action

S.23.71 **OPEN AND WELCOME**
The Committee Chair opened the meeting, welcoming everyone and thanking them for their flexibility in moving to an online meeting.

S.23.72 **ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies for absence were given and with the meeting confirmed as quorate, apologies were accepted by the Committee.

Item 1 – Resolved: Members accepted the apologies as detailed above.

S.23.73 **ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Members confirmed that standing interests were unchanged with none relating to items on the agenda.

Item 2 – Noted: The Committee resolved to note the declaration.

S.23.74 **ITEM 3: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 7th MARCH 2023**
Members were given the opportunity to raise any points of inaccuracy from minutes of the meeting held on March 7th 2023.
The Chair invited members to raise any additional matters not included under item 4 or elsewhere in the agenda, with none raised, the minutes were approved.

Item 3 - Approved: The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2023.

Minute No.	Minutes	Action

S.23.75 ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING / ACTIONS SUMMARY

The Clerk summarised the report, with members attention drawn to actions carried forward, reminding governors of the invitation to attend curriculum planning meetings. Members noted the rationale for deferral of the EDI objectives to September.

The Clerk notified the Committee that an additional action had been added by the Audit Committee, not included in the papers as it had been after circulation. Members were informed of the Audit Committee's request for the Standards Committee to consider the impact of staffing within their risk review, in addition to risks that relate solely to quality of provision, confirming this would be a verbal update by the Vice Principal under item 10.1.

Members were provided with a summary of discussions held by the Committee Chair around the need to strengthen the quality cycle, with stronger links between policies, strategies, processes, and procedures. Members agreed that moving towards an integrated quality cycle would require a detailed review and could not be implemented at pace whilst managing other priorities but needed to be incorporated into longer term planning for the review of policies, particularly in relation to quality. **VP C&P/ Principal/ Cttee Chair**

The Committee Chair offered his support in the implementation, particularly with drafting and reviewing policies.

Item 4 - Resolved: The Committee noted the update.

S.23.76 ITEM 5: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

No items within the minutes or on the agenda were considered to be confidential.

Members were reminded of the need for transparency, and a free flow of information between the senior team and governors, with discussions to be maintained confidentially until the publication of approved minutes. Members noted there needed to be a balance between transparency and confidentiality of potentially sensitive data when publishing the minutes of meetings.

Item 5 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to approve the minutes for publication. The Committee confirmed they did not need any items on the agenda to be reviewed confidentially.

ITEM 6 QUALITY ISSUES

S.23.77 Item 6.1: Quality of Education Report

The Chair invited the Vice Principal Curriculum and Performance to summarise the report, highlighting the effectiveness of the new format, focusing on intent, implementation and impact.

Members attention was drawn to key points, including attendance and retention rates.

Members were informed of the communication strategy underpinning the KPI dashboard data, noting there had been a misconception within college that areas had been performing better than the data indicated which had now been resolved.

Consistency in tracking and monitoring had been a key focus, with tolerance applied to the predicted outcomes to take account of earlier inconsistencies,

with assurances that processes were in place to ensure accuracy and consistency from the outset in the coming academic year.

Members were informed of the culture of high expectations, clear processes. clarity of roles and higher accountability.

In summarising the benchmarking information, as detailed at the strategy event, members noted information available from local institutions ahead of the publication had led to a false sense of positivity, with the publication providing a disappointing realisation. Actions were detailed that would ensure the data positively reflected the hard work of the teams in the coming year, with improvements to be at least 5%.

Recruitment issues were detailed and discussed at length. This was contextualised within the national picture, noting pay, particularly when compared with sixth form colleges and industry as a key factor, with progress outlined, which included appointments made as well as updates to staffing structures.

Members discussed the updated structure, staffing issues and the impact on students, staff workloads and morale, with questions raised in relation to succession planning, which was in part being addressed through the new structure, training opportunities and support.

Members raised concerns over progress in apprenticeships, noting that although the number of out of funding learners was reducing, progress was slow. The staffing issues were considered to be preventing progress at pace, with a resolution being to overstaff the area, with plans now in place as a result of data and information form timely reviews. The VP agreed the progress to date was not acceptable, assuring the Committee that the planned actions, which included addressing staff performance, would have an impact, with an update on progress to be provided at the next meeting. It was clarified that the plan, as an operational document, had not been included, however, members proposed that in light of concerns, a high-level overview of this would be helpful. Oversight and consistency were considered key, with a need to embed a culture of high expectations. Other concerns, as circulated by email were summarised, with the Committee Chair indicating that further work was needed to help the governors understand if this was a compliance or process issue, if the process was not right or not being followed. The VP agreed to meet with the governor that had documented a number of questions and concerns to review them in more detail.

VP/AP MIS & Appr.

VP/AP MIS & Appr.

VP/SP

The Committee was given an overview of progress with curriculum planning and the success of the projects related to the Southport Town Fund, Strategic Development Fund and LCR Test and Learn funds.

Members sought clarity around the reasons for differing retention rates across the two campuses and actions for improvement, with increasing pressure related to the cost of living crisis having a disproportionate impact on some students, with the student support team offering support and signposting to services to mitigate the impact. Members considered the impact of staffing changes on retention, with it acknowledged this also had an impact in some areas.

In concluding, members attention was drawn to areas that had improved or were demonstrating consistently high performance, confirming these were being celebrated and commended within college, with the opportunity to

share best practice. Members thanked staff for the clarity of their reports and verbal updates, noting there were clear threads and reports aligned to highlight key themes.

Item 6.1 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update subject to the provision of further assurances and information relating to apprenticeship progress.*

S.23.78 **Item 6.2: Quality Development Plan Update**
On behalf of the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality, the Vice Principal Curriculum and Performance informed the Committee of progress against the Quality Development Plan, advising that a 5% tolerance had been built in, with it expected outcomes would improve.

The triangulation of data with feedback and observations was said to support progress and all actions were on track, and although not as much progress as hoped for, the end position provided a solid foundation for further improvements in the next academic year.

Members indicated how this linked to the overarching quality strategy discussed earlier, with a need to interlink all policies and procedures in the long term.

In response to a member question, a summary of the intervention strategies was provided, with this linked to the risk register and mitigations, with consideration given for how this linked to perception and reputation, noting the benefits from the improved perspectives around KGV.

Item 6.2 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update.*

S.23.79 **Item 6.3: Learner Voice Semester 2**
The Committee commended the improvements to response rates. In response to questions relating to comparative data, members were advised the change in format and provider meant this was going to be the baseline data, with comparisons included from next year.

The opportunity was offered for the new student governor, present as an attendee, to provide any additional feedback. Comments relating to safety were discussed with actions agreed to review this further with the AP Student Experience and Welfare and feed this back to the Committee Chair.

AP S.E. & Welf/ Stu. Gov.

Members were advised of improvement to processes and triangulation of student voice information as a result of external advice following an internal audit to be incorporated into an updated learner voice implementation plan.

Item 6.3 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update.*

S.23.80 **Item 6.4: Quality Strategy 2023/2024**
On behalf of the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality, the Vice Principal Curriculum and Performance informed the Committee that a review of the Strategy had concluded in a recommendation for closer monitoring of performance, with a summary of the new process outlined to the Committee. Members agreed the proposals increased accountability, whilst ensuring staff were supported when necessary and success celebrated.

Members provided feedback and ideas from sector experience, which aligned with the updated process, with the Committee agreeing to recommend it to the Corporation for approval.

Item 6.4 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the Strategy to the Corporation for approval.*

S.23.81   **ITEM 7: SAFEGUARDING**
The AP Student Experience and Welfare highlighted to the Committee the year-on-year increase in the number of interventions.

The reasons and support offered were detailed, as well as the impact on retention and outcomes for 'looked after' children.

Members asked for an update on staff training completion rates, with it explained that most related to staff on leave or on contracted hours, who previously could not be contacted due to email address issues. Which have now been resolved. It was clarified that training was embedded into the induction process and checked at probationary meetings.

Members highlighted how the increased student interventions impacted staff, asking how the college supported staff. The Committee was assured that this was addressed through a number of mechanisms, including having a senior lead for mental health, working alongside HR to ensure staff and students are aware of support available and can access this when needed.

The AP Student Experience and Welfare was thanked for his comprehensive response to the questions, and for the report, which had been informative and detailed yet concise.

Item 7 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the report.*

S.23.82   **ITEM 8: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**
The AP Student Experience and Welfare advised the Committee of progress to date against the existing EDI objectives, drawing attention to the in-college activities completed this term. Members were informed that the new long-term objectives were being consulted upon and would be presented for approval at the next meeting.

Members were advised of the Level 7 qualification being undertaken by the EDI lead, with the committee noting it was a positive step to invest in staff, particularly on an important topic, asking that the impact and benefits are captured.

Item 8 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the report, recommending the Corporation review this as essential information.*

ITEM 9: REPORTING AGAINST STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ACTION PLANS
S.23.83   **Item 9.1: SO1 - To provide excellent teaching, learning and support**
The Vice Principal, on behalf of the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality provided a summary of progress, including updates to actions where staffing had prevented some actions from having the anticipated impact, with this resolved through the introduction of a new role responsible for learning, innovation, and teacher education, with the remit outlined and supported by the Committee.

Members discussed the impact and implications of AI, where this is already supporting curriculum delivery and plans for this to be embedded into CPD and the curriculum as well as commending the commitment to updating timetables across the two sites to ensure equal access to CPD.

S.23.84

Item 9.2: SO2 - To meet the needs of the community and contribute to the local and national economy by offering a carefully considered diverse range of professional, technical, and academic programmes
The Vice Principal summarised the progress, drawing attention to areas of the plan that had not been met, with a view to focusing on quality improvements in the coming year.

Progress on sustainability was noted as slow due to limited resources, however, was improving, with a consultative group now set up and actions already being seen as a result of early suggestions.

Collaborative work, including stronger links with the community and school were outlined and described as mutually beneficial, with this informing curriculum planning work.

T Level staffing was noted to be a concern, with the outcomes of bids due over the summer.

S.23.85

Item 9.3: SO3 - 10.3: To facilitate students and apprentices achieving the highest possible outcomes to progress on to ambitious destinations
The AP Student Experience, Welfare and Support provided an overview of progress, highlighting success at meeting all but one of the Gatsby benchmarks, with this being the recruitment of a Level Six Advisor, with a Level Four recruited and training in place to progress to Level 6, to be completed in 18 months.

Members commended the improvements in internal progression.

Item 9 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to note the updates.

ITEM 10: STANDING ITEMS

S.23.86

10.1: Risks Related to Standards
The Vice Principal summarised the report and provided the committee with additional information relating to staffing. Members noted how this had been reviewed and discussed at length relating to a number of the reports. Members agreed that this risk, although allocated to Resources for consideration due to the financial implications and having oversight for HR and staffing, needed be reviewed by the Standards Committee due to the impact on quality, student experience, and curriculum planning.

VP/ Committee

The Vice Principal highlighted the reputational risk relating to outcomes, with members asking for clarity on the risk register review process.

Item 10.1 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to note the update, agreeing to include staffing risks and mitigations in future reviews.

S.23.87

10.2: Reports from the Internal Audit Service

10.2.1: Apprenticeship Delivery Model

Members were given an overview of the outcomes, noting this was in relation to compliance with funding regulations, initiated as a follow up to the previous review and outlined a number of improvements, as well as areas still requiring further action.

Members reiterated the need to see improvements and the implications of failing to resolve issues, particularly in relation to timely reviews.

The Committee Chair drew attention to the points raised by email, indicating how local expertise and knowledge were providing insight into the reputational risks, which needed to be used to drive improvements. Members again agreed that the detail of the action plan, although operational, would support them in understanding the actions and lines of accountability. It was suggested a dashboard of KPI's for apprenticeships would support the Committee in understanding where improvements have been made, with the inclusion of any available benchmarking data to contextualise the position.

VP/AP MIS & Appr.

In response to a question, members were given details of specific areas that had been cause for concern and actions to address underperformance.

10.2.2: Student Voice

The Committee was provided with a summary of the recommendations, as outlined under student voice.

Item 10.2 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the updates, requesting further information relating to apprenticeship improvements.

ITEM 11: POLICIES

S.23.88

Item 11.1: Freedom of Speech Policy

The Vice Principal, on behalf of the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality, summarised the statutory updates resulting in the need to fully revise the policy to reflect the new statutory requirements.

The Committee proposed the policy accurately reflected the statutory requirements, however, failed to fully outline how the College was interpreting and applying this within the context of their provision.

The Committee was assured that this first draft was to be reviewed by the College's legal advisors to ensure it fully captured all statutory requirements. The Committee proposed it could not be approved in the current format and would reconsider the policy once the legal advisors had provided their feedback, suggesting staff should also be consulted upon when revising a policy that affected them, referring back to earlier comments around the simplification of policies and threading them into and linking them to the quality cycle.

Members suggested some improvements to improve clarity, with the offer of a sample policy from a member's own institution to be provided for reference.

Item 11.1 – Deferred: The Committee resolved to recommend the policy is subject to a further review ahead of recommending it for approval.

S.23.89

Item 11.2: Complaints Policy

The Vice Principal, on behalf The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality summarised the amendments. Members indicated the inclusion of the flow-chart made it easy for the user to follow the process. In recommending this for approval, they asked for their gratitude to be passed on to the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality.

Item 11.2 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.

S.23.90   **ITEM 12: HIGHER EDUCATION**
12.1   HE Quality Development Plan 2022-2023 Update
The Vice Principal on behalf of the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality summarised the key points, confirming the decision not to continue with the HE offer in its current form limited the scope of the Plan, with a summary of progress to date provided to the Committee.

Item 12.1 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the update.

S.23.91   **12.2   HE Student Protection Plan**
The Vice Principal on behalf of the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality summarised the updates made to reflect offer for HE for the coming year.

Item 12.2 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to recommend the plan to the Corporation for approval.

S.23.92   **12.3   OfS De-Registration Update**
The Vice Principal on behalf of the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality thanked the Clerk for her support in drafting the letter.

The implications of remaining registered for a further year were reviewed, with an overview of the sector-wide decline of HE in FE. The VP explained how the decision had been discussed at the curriculum efficiency review by the FEC team, who had indicated their support of the decision.

Members discussed reputational considerations and implications for students ahead of thanking the Vice Principal for the update.

Item 12.3 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to note the update.

S.23.93   **ITEM 13: PLANNING AND REFLECTING**
Item 13.1 2023/2024 Planning
The Clerk confirmed the updates were minimal in terms of accountability, and mainly centred around clarity of wording and membership updates.

Members noted the intention for papers in 2023/2024 to reflect the new strategic plan, and accepted that due to the continued rolling programme of review and improvements, to be supported by the new Vice Principal and Chair, the plan was only a skeleton overview subject to amendments as the year progressed.

Item 13.1 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to recommend the updates to the Corporation.

S.23.94   **ITEM 13.2: ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE CORPORATION**

Members discussed at length the need to draw the attention of the Corporation to key risks and areas of detailed discussion, particularly around the need to maintain a focus on improvements in apprenticeship delivery.

Members asked that the attention of the Corporation is drawn to the increasing concerns around mental health, including the impact on staff, highlighting how this is considered a strength of the college in terms of awareness and mitigation.

It was agreed that the impact of staffing issues should be highlighted, to assure the Audit Committee that this had been considered at length in relation to a number of papers throughout the meeting, with the Principal confirming this would also be addressed within her report to open the Corporation meeting.

The Chair agreed to provide a summary on work towards improving the quality cycle, with plans to develop this further to include and embed policies and procedures.

Members also asked that progress and successes were highlighted, to include achieving all but one Gatsby benchmarks, the alignment of reports to the KPI scorecard, student survey improvements and maintaining compliance with the PSED with plans to further improve and develop EDI processes through investing in staff qualifications.

The Clerk summarised the resolutions and recommendations to be presented to the Corporation as follows:

For approval:
- Quality Strategy 2023/24
- HE Student Protection Plan
- Committee Terms of Reference
- Complaints Policy

For assurance
- the EDI report to include PSED reporting requirements

Item 13.2 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the information as outlined above to the Board of Governors.*

S.23.95   **ITEM 14 CLOSING COMMENTS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
The Chair thanked everyone for their time and contributions to the detailed discussions in support of driving improvements for the College.
The Clerk asked members to flag any key dates/days that would cause issues in terms of meetings in the following year as the final calendar of events was being developed. A member asked for introductions to be made at the start of meetings to support members with getting to know new staff and members,

Item 14 – Noted:

The meeting ended at 5.20pm.